

## **After You Have Done Your D-I-Y Inspection...**

Okay, so you have gone through the checklist and made your notes. You sit down together and look over the list and talk about the pros and cons of the house. Maybe it's a clear choice one way or another. Whoa! Too much wrong here! We sure don't want this one. Or, maybe, yeah, it has some problems but we really, really like the house. Let's go for it.

Lots of times you are going to come down somewhere in the middle. Maybe yes, maybe no. We just need to get some of these questions answered. That is where your real estate agent can help you. When someone sells a house they have to fill out a disclosure form. On that form they are supposed to tell about all the problems they know about in the house. It's a checklist kind of like yours and they can answer yes, no, or no representation.

Are there any problems with the electrical system? No, everything works just fine. Or, well yes, that floodlight on the back of the house is broken and when the clothes iron and the toaster are both on at the same time, the breaker trips. Or, they can say "No Representation". That can mean two different things. It can mean well, we don't think anything is wrong but we aren't going to say no just in case something is wrong. Or, it can mean yeah, there are some problems but we are going to pretend we don't know about them. It's up to you to figure out which is true.

So, compare your list with theirs. How well do things match up? You might find the seller has been upfront and told you everything they know is wrong. You might find they answered "No Representation" to almost everything. That tells you something different about the seller. Or, maybe they answered "No" to a lot of things where you found some pretty obvious problems. That tells you something else about the seller. Use your real estate agent's experience and knowledge of human nature to help you sort out what it all means.

At this point, you have to decide whether you want to make an offer on the house or not. Remember, it is not just a case of how much you want the house. A big part of it is whether you can reach an acceptable deal with the seller. Your real estate agent has a lot of experience making these kind of deals. Consider your agent's advice carefully but make your own decisions. Remember, everything is negotiable. Don't be afraid to ask for what you want and need but also know what your limits are. Be prepared to walk away if you can't get the deal you need. Better to have no deal than a bad deal.

Remember, even if you are able to reach an agreement with the seller, the negotiations are not over. Once you get the HOP inspector's report and the home inspector's report, you are going to have to negotiate some more.